



### 1. Design

The first step on the story of a t-shirt is the design. This could happen up to six months before the t-shirt arrives in stores. Most of the t-shirts we buy on the High Street in the UK are also designed by designers in the UK. They make decisions about the style, colours and fibre content of a garment. The buyer for the retailer will then decide on where in the world the garment is made and the next step on the t-shirts journey.



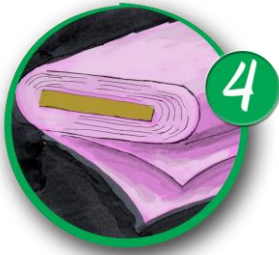
### 2. Cotton production

Cotton is produced in many countries around the world including India. The growing season for cotton is between 150-180 days. The process of growing cotton can use large amounts of water, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, although organic cotton production reduces these environmental impacts. Cotton farming has traditionally been a very labour intensive process where the seeds are planted by hand, as well as weeding and harvesting. Some of the more developed cotton farming countries are beginning to use mechanised techniques to undertake these tasks



### 3. Spinning

Cotton lint arrives at the mill in bales in places like Indonesia. The lint is blended and passed into carding machines that separates and aligns the fibres to produce a rope-like strand. The rope-like strand is drawn and twisted as it is spun to produce the required thickness or 'count' of yarn needed for weaving.



#### 4. Fabric production

The yarn is shipped to places like Bangladesh, where it is knitted into a jersey fabric ready for dyeing. The dry cotton jersey is passed through a trough of dye, the excess dye is then squeezed out and the fabric is finished to fix the dyes and achieve the required handle and feel of the fabric.



#### 5. Garment production

The dyed fabric is shipped to the cutting and sewing factory. The fabric is allowed to relax to prevent shrinkage in the final garment and then cut into the required pattern pieces. These pieces are then distributed to the machinists, often women, to sew together and make the garment. The garments are then labelled, pressed and packed ready for shipping back to the UK.



#### 6. The retailer

The t-shirts are shipped from countries like Bangladesh, China and Mauritius to the UK to the retailers' distribution centres before arriving in stores for us to buy.



#### 7. In-use

Once in our homes we wear and wash our t-shirts. Washing our clothes accounts for between 15% and 40% of our total annual water consumption, depending on the amount of water our machines use or how often we wash clothes.



#### 8. Recycling

At the end of the life of a t-shirt it may be taken to a charity shop, a textile recycling bin or put into household rubbish. However, even heavily worn fibres can be reused. They may not be suitable to be used for creating new fabric, but could be recycled into new uses such as the stuffing for car seats.